

Thomas Jefferson Southard Block  
25 Front Street  
Richmond  
Sagadahoc County  
Maine

HABS No. ME-159

HABS  
ME  
12-RICH  
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## THOMAS JEFFERSON SOUTHARD BLOCK

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Location: 25 Front Street (west side between White and Church Streets), Richmond, Sagadahoc County, Maine.

Present Owner: Arthur L. Terrell and Carroll F. Terrell.

Present Occupant: First floor: Left front office, Richmond, Maine, School Department; right front office, a real estate and insurance firm; rear rooms, apartments. Second and third floors: Vacant.

Present Use: Combined office and apartment usage.

Statement of Significance: The Southard Block is a late example of a small town mansard-roofed commercial building with an original bank and counting house room surviving. The first story has a cast iron front of Boston origin. The structure was designed and built by Thomas J. Southard, prominent Richmond ship-builder and developer.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is the office of the Registrar of Deeds Sagadahoc County.

1880 Deed October 8, 1880 recorded October 9, 1880  
in Book 55 page 169 (lot - no mention of building)  
Jefferson Harthorn  
to  
Thomas J. Southard

1902 Deed October 25, 1902 recorded November 4, 1902  
in Book 104 page 369  
C.H.T.J. Southard and William T. Hall, surviving  
executors of the estate of Thomas J. Southard  
to  
C.H.T.J. Southard

1913 Devise March 26, 1913 recorded March 26, 1913  
in Book 122 page 138  
Last will and testament of C.H.T.J. Southard

probated December 3, 1912: "First I bequeath all my property, real and personal wheresoever the same may be, to my son Thomas J. Southard."

HABS  
ME  
12-RICH  
4-

- 1935 Mortgage November 8, 1935 recorded November 12, 1935 in Book 191 page 316  
Thomas J. Southard  
to  
Depositors Trustee Company
- 1940 Mortgage Deed October 1, 1940 recorded October 28, 1940 in Book 220 page 71  
Depositors Trustee Company  
to  
Donald R. Foster
- 1941 Deed November 18, 1941 recorded December 31, 1941 in Book 227 page 113  
Donald R. Foster  
to  
Richmond Masonic Association, Incorporated
- 1965 Deed February 16, 1965 recorded February 19, 1965 in Book 341 page 212 and Book 349 page 52  
Richmond Masonic Association, Incorporated  
to  
Arthur L. Terrell and Carroll F. Terrell
2. Date of erection: Thomas J. Southard purchased the site in the fall of 1880. The next year he erected the mill across the street, and in 1882 he built the block, finishing it in March of 1883. A marble marker above the center second story window of the facade bears the inscription, "Southard Block/1882".
  3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Designed by Thomas J. Southard (1808-1896) with assistance from Thomas M. Rollins (1848-1921), an Augusta carpenter. The first story cast iron front was manufactured by the G. W. and F. Smith Iron Company of Boston.
  4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None.
  5. Alterations and additions: A major portion of the south wall was originally covered by an end wall of the adjacent wooden row house. This structure has been shortened by a unit, leaving rough brick work exposed on the Southard Block. The front office on each side of the first floor of the building has become modernized. Until recently Southard's bank and counting house room

at the left front (southeast) corner of the first floor was intact. During the summer of 1971, the owners took the opportunity of renting this space to the Town of Richmond for school department offices. Their purpose was to generate more funds with which to carry on restoration of the building. In order to make the space usable, the bank and counting house fixtures were stored in another part of the building. Plaster walls with original borders of wallpaper were carefully covered with thin wall board. Original features were photographed before alteration for this HABS survey. It is the hope of both the owners and of the Richmond Historical and Cultural Association that the Southard bank and counting room can be completely restored when it is economically feasible.

HABS  
ME  
12-RICH  
4-

6. Important old views: Photograph of the facade of the block taken circa 1890. Photograph in possession of Mrs. H. A. Everson, Cedar Grove, Dresden, Maine.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Thomas J. Southard used the large left front room on the first floor as his bank and counting house from 1883 until his death in 1896. The hall on the third floor was used by the Masons and Knights of Pythias.

C. Supplemental Material: None.

D. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Sagadahoc County Registry of Deeds, Sagadahoc County Courthouse, High Street, Bath, Maine 04530.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Fleming, John Daly (ed.). Richmond on the Kennebec. Lewiston: Twin City Printery, 1966.

"From the Anvil to Riches," a biographical sketch of Thomas J. Southard, Boston Herald (Monday, November 18, 1889, page 8).

Richmond Bee. Richmond, Maine, 1882-83, at the Umbertine Public Library, Main Street, Richmond, Maine 04357.

Typescript of Belgrade, Maine, Cemetery Records at Maine Historical Society, 485 Congress Street,

Portland, Maine 04101. For Thomas M. Rollins' dates.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Southard Block, built in 1882-83, is a brick and mansard-roofed business building of straightforward, dignified design. An important feature of the structure is the first story cast iron front from Boston with its four handsomely detailed columns.
2. Condition of fabric: Some alteration, fair to good over-all condition with long-term restoration underway.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 52' x 55', approximately square, three stories; facade bays, seven on first story, five on second story, and four on third story.
2. Foundations: Brick masonry.
3. Wall construction: First and second floors, brick with exception of first story facade which has a cast iron front supported by granite; third floor (mansard roof), wood with slate shingles.
4. Framing: Standard light frame construction with wooden studs, joists, and rafters.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Three granite steps to main (east) entrance and to side entrance at northeast corner of north wall. Two granite steps to side entrance at northwest corner of north wall. Iron fire escape on south wall extending from upper southeast corner of building to lower southwest corner.
6. Chimneys: Two rectangular brick chimneys, one near the southeast corner of the south side of the roof, the other near the southwest corner of the west side.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Wooden main (east) double doors each have two small horizontal rectangular panels in the lower section with a long vertical

piece of glass above. There is a large horizontal, rectangular overlight above the double doors. Office side entrance at northwest corner of north wall has wooden door, the upper two-thirds of which is a vertical piece of glass. Above the door is a horizontal, rectangular overlight. A brick arch with a granite keystone and granite blocks at either end is found above the overlight. Similar treatment is given the apartment doorway at the northwest corner of the north wall, with the exception that the door is completely wooden. A simpler approach is used for the other apartment entrance at the southwest corner of the south wall. There the door is wooden, has no overlight, and receives only simple arched brick treatment above it.

HABS  
ME  
12-RICH  
4-

- b. Windows and shutters: With exception of first and second story facade, all windows are divided into four vertical rectangular panes in a two-over-two-light pattern. Facade (east wall): First story has three large, approximately square windows on either side of central doorway. Each of these windows is divided into four large, approximately square panes of glass which are held by simple wooden moldings; Second story has a central double window divided by a thick wooden molding. This window has a granite sill below and the marble Southard marker above. On either side of the central window are two regular two-over-two windows having granite sills below and brick arches above with granite keystones and end blocks; Third story possesses four dormer windows surrounded by wooden trim. South wall: First story, three regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and simple brick arches above; Second story, four regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and simple brick arches above; Third story, four dormer windows surrounded by wooden trim. North wall: First story, four regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and brick arches above with granite keystones and end blocks; Second story, five regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and brick arches above with granite keystones and end blocks; Third story, four dormer windows surrounded by wooden trim. West wall: First story, three regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and simple brick arches above; Second story, three regular two-over-two windows with granite sills below and simple brick arches above; Third story, four dormer windows surrounded by wooden trim.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Mansard roof. Covering, slate shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed cornices, eaves overhang second story walls, a series of wooden brackets runs under the eaves.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Each of the four sides of the mansard roof has four evenly-spaced wooden dormers. Each dormer is rectangular with a vertical orientation, has a vertical bracket at either side of its base, and is capped by a triangular pediment. In height, the dormers almost reach the top of the roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Full basement extends under building.
- b. First floor: Central entrance on east side opens into short, broad hall with major staircase. To left of hall is Southard bank and counting house room, now office of the Richmond School Department. This was divided into two areas, a public one 22' x 20' and a private one behind it 17' x 13'. In the northwest corner of the west wall of the public section is a walk-in wall safe. The room is 12' high. Behind the private area is an apartment. To the right of the staircase is another large room, which is now a real estate and insurance office. A walk-in safe is located in the southwest corner of the west wall. An apartment is behind the room.
- c. Second floor: Central staircase leads to central hallway in which there is another staircase to third floor. On either side of the hallway is a large room, one at the southeast corner of the building and the other at the northeast corner. Between them over the first to second floor staircase is a small room located at the center of the facade (east side). Behind the two large rooms are several smaller ones of varying sizes. This floor was probably originally used for offices.
- d. Third floor: Central staircase comes almost to rear

(west wall) of third floor. Front half of floor devoted to large hall 38' x 49' and 14' high. Behind the hall in the southwest corner are two small rooms, while in the northwest corner there is one large room.

e. Attic: None.

2. Stairways: Basement stairs under main staircase at northwest corner of north wall in public section of former Southard bank and counting house room. Main staircase begins in first floor central hall at front (east side) of the building. This 6' wide, hard pine stairway ascends straight to second floor central hallway at center of building. The final staircase begins at the second floor central hallway and makes a straight ascension almost to rear (west side) of third floor. Measuring 4' in width, this stairway is also of hard pine.
3. Flooring: Narrow wooden strips, varnished.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and wallpaper. The two first story front rooms have a low wainscoting of vertical ash strips and horizontal black walnut moldings.
5. Doorways and doors: Doorway to Southard bank and counting house room at left of first floor main hallway has thick black walnut moldings on either side. The black walnut entrance door features two small, approximately square lower panels, a horizontal rectangular panel above with the gold-lettered cardboard sign "T.J.Southard & Son" (originally glass-covered), and then two long vertical rectangular panes of frosted glass. This is the most ornamental doorway and door in the Block. Others in the two first story front offices are similar but lack the sign and frosted glass. Doorways and doors in the first floor apartments and the remainder of the building are somewhat simpler.
6. Decorative features and trim: Until the summer of 1971, the Southard bank and counting house room had the finest remaining decorative features in the Block. (See Alterations and additions.) Besides the previously described wainscoting, doorway, and door, the room possessed such original fixtures as a stand-up desk in the southeast corner of the south wall, a large, ornate marble and black walnut counter, and a tall black walnut arch which provided access from the public to the private area. Division of these areas



was made by a wooden colonnade and large windows behind the counter. Walls and ceiling were surrounded by decorative paper borders, and the center of the ceiling had a large paper square. The safe door was painted with gold designs, a maritime scene, and the words "Hall's Safe & Lock Co." It was surrounded by a decorative cast iron enframingent. Similar treatment is given the safe in the other first floor front office. On the second floor, the large northeast room and the smaller one at the center of the facade (east side) are both covered with green rice paper and still possess wallpaper borders and gold picture moldings near the ceiling.

7. Notable hardware: The walk-in safe in each of the two first story front rooms. Each vault is entered by a large iron door around which is a cast iron enframingent. The safe floor is of brick a foot thick. The interior is seven feet high and has iron walls and an iron ceiling which are covered with two feet of brick.
8. Lighting: Modern electrical fixtures on the first floor, which has regular use.
9. Heating: Hot water, oil-fired baseboard radiation on the first floor.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Thomas J. Southard Block is situated at the northwest corner of Front and White Streets overlooking the waterfront of Richmond. Front Street runs parallel with the Kennebec River and is three hundred feet from it. Immediately south of the building is a deteriorating wooden row house and next to that a two-and-a-half story gable roof brick tenement, both of which Southard erected in the early 1880's. The land directly across Front Street has been cleared for a boat launch and for a parking area to serve the adjacent mill that Southard built in 1881.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Brick walk in front (east) of the building.
5. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.  
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